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Greater Emphasis On Rural Young People's Extension Work Planned

A national conference for the planning and development of extension programs with special appeal to rural young people beyond 4-H Club age and interest was held this week at the West Virginia State 4-H Club Camp at Jackson's Mill, Weston, West Virginia. The conference, authorized by the Committee on Extension Organization and Policy, Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, was attended by cooperative extension workers representing State agricultural colleges from 31 States and the Extension Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

There has been an increasing demand for development of extension programs with special adaptation to the needs and interests of men and women under 30 years of age in rural areas. "The Extension Service has done a marvelous job in teaching people the way of better farm production," said Associate Director L. E. Hoffman, of the Indiana Extension Service, Purdue University, and chairman of the committee sponsoring the conference. "But these young people want us to help them in more than how to grow corn, hogs, and cotton. They're interested in many things. They're interested in recreation and similar activities of groups their own age. They're looking forward to getting established in homes of their own, either on the farm or in connection with jobs that offer them a future. They're interested in taking an active part in their community. The Extension Service is equipped to develop educational services along these lines. At this conference we have looked into all angles of the problem and now will have a set of principles and recommendations for each land-grant college to study and adapt to fit the situation in their States."

On Monday and Tuesday the conference heard reports of rural young people's programs under way in different States. On Wednesday and Thursday, the conference was divided into five groups taking up these areas of interest: Program Objectives and Guiding Principles; Program Methods, Terminology, and Age Groupings; Program Content; Relationships; Situation Analysis, Reporting, and Evaluation. The reports and full recommendation on each of these are being made available to State Cooperative Extension Services.

"Insofar as the future of cooperative extension programs is concerned," Director J. O. Knapp, of West Virginia Extension Service, said, "This was one of the most important national conferences ever held. Discussion was based on analysis rather than opinion, and I am certain that it will have a good and permanent effect insofar as the Extension Service's work with young people is concerned. I am delighted that the conference could be held at our State 4-H Club Camp at Jackson's Mill."

A list of those attending the conference is attached. Besides Director Hoffman and Director Knapp, other directors here included: Walter Brown, Georgia; C. B. Ballard, Michigan; L. I. Jones, Mississippi; Willard A. Munson, Massachusetts; M. L. Wilson, Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

